

100 TIPS FOR SOCIAL AUDITS

A Primer



EDUCATE, AGITATE, ORGANISE

RIGHT TO FOOD CAMPAIGN, 2016

15587

CLIC
SOPHEA

SOCHARA

Community Health

Library and Information Centre (CLIC)

Community Health Cell

85/2, 1st Main, Maruthi Nagar, Madiwala,

Bengaluru - 560 068

Tel : (080) 25531518 email : clic@sochara.org

www.sochara.org

100 Tips for Social Audits

September 2016



Foreword

This booklet is part of a series of Primers prepared for the 6th National Convention on the Right to Food and Work (Ranchi, 23-25 September 2016). The purpose of these Primers is to help you to know your rights and how to defend them.

The Primers focus on different economic and social rights, including the right to information, the right to food, the right to work, forest rights, children's rights, the right to education, and more. They are written in simple language, for a wide audience.

The Primers are action-oriented: it is hoped that they will be used in collective struggles for social and economic rights. For further information as well as ideas for action, please take a look at the website of the Right to Food Campaign (righttofoodcampaign.in). To order copies of these primers, please contact the secretariat of the campaign.

Credits

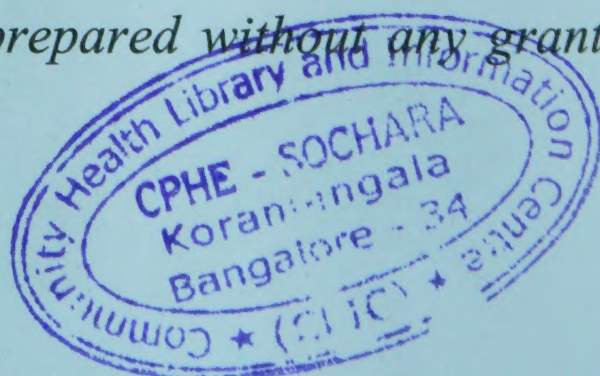
Text: Jean Drèze and Reetika Khera

Illustrations: Jessica Pudussery

Design: Sneha Menon

Series editor: Ankita Aggarwal

All the contributors gave their time without remuneration. All the Primers in this series were prepared without any grant or support from any institution.



BA-100

15507

P16

Contents

1. Preparation.....	1
2. Training.....	4
3. Field Investigations.....	6
4. Logistics and Finance	8
6. Public Hearing: Preparations	12
7. Public Hearing: Proceedings	14
8. Media Work.....	17
9. Follow-up.....	17
10. Other Ethical Issues	19
Annexures	20

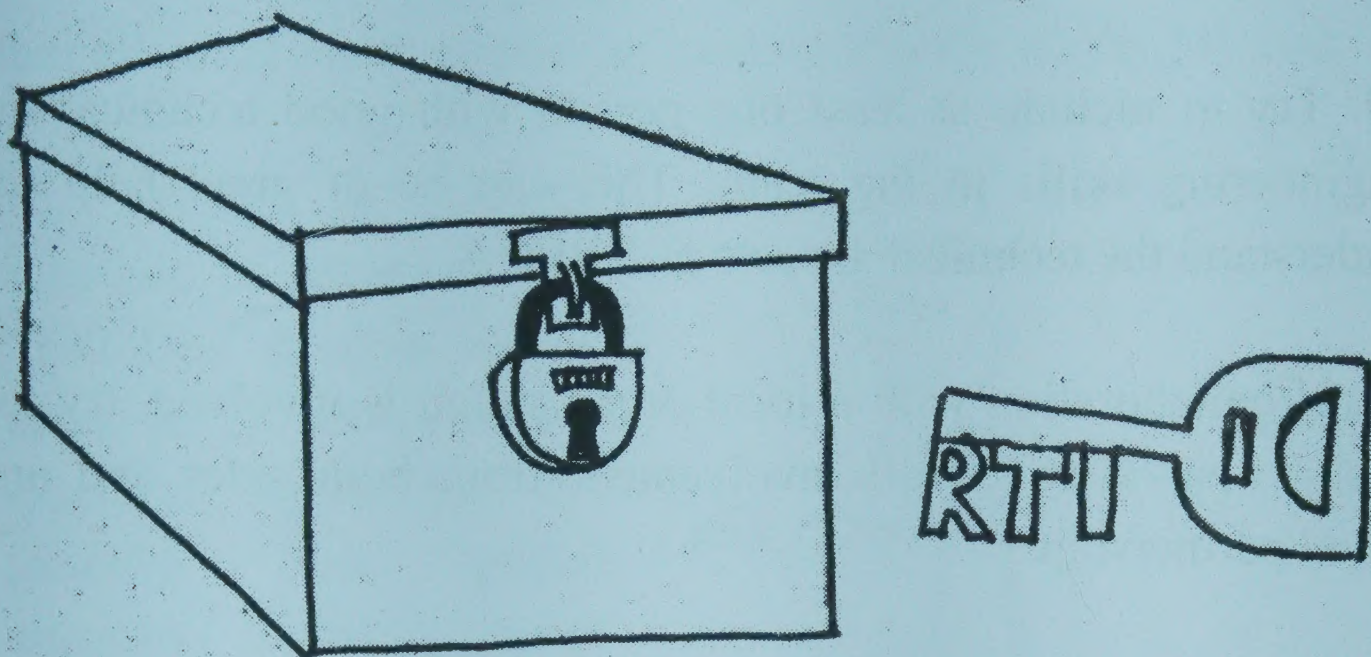
100 Tips for Social Audits

This booklet presents a collection of “tips” that have emerged from social audits around the country - in Dungarpur, Hardoi, Ranchi, Villupuram, Jhalawar, Palamau, Deogarh, among other places. It was written with specific reference to social audits of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), but the tips can be easily adapted to other contexts. The booklet should not be read as a rigid “manual” for social audits, but as one possible way of doing things. There are no hard and fast rules on most points – the tips are intended as suggestions based on experience and the rest is left to your imagination!

1. Preparation

1. Be clear about the purpose, politics and ethics of the social audit before you begin. Think in particular about your role and how it relates to the local administration, Gram Panchayats, and Gram Sabhas.
2. Preparations should start well in advance. Keep minutes of the preparatory meetings and prepare a “task list” to allocate responsibilities.
3. Think creatively about the range of possible activities that can be taken up during the social audit (e.g. muster roll verification, public meetings, awareness generation, worksite inspections, cultural programmes, yatras, *shramdaan* at NREGA worksites, etc.).

4. Apply for all relevant documents well in advance, under the Right to Information (RTI) Act if necessary. Make sure that documents are not tampered with before they are photocopied.



5. Think carefully about the selection area/villages for the social audit. For instance, doing the social audit in an area where some local organizations are already working on NREGA can help to ensure adequate follow-up.

6. Give similar thought to the selection of works to be audited, e.g. distinguishing between completed and ongoing worksites.

7. Avoid taking on more villages or NREGA works than you can reasonably hope to cover, given the number of volunteers and other resources available. Quality is often more important than quantity.

8. Seek the cooperation of the local administration (without “depending” on it, except for releasing documents).

9. Make sure that the “banner” under which the social audit is being conducted is clear, and that the decision-making process is transparent. If needed, form a core group for this purpose, with adequate representation of disadvantaged groups.

10. Try to include at least one person with good technical or engineering skills in the team. This can be of great help to understand the technical aspects of NREGA.

11. If collaboration with a local organisation is involved, try to ensure that there is full involvement from both sides and an equal partnership.

12. Make sure to facilitate the participation of disadvantaged groups, and ensure in particular that women are actively involved in good number in the entire process.

13. Try to involve local residents, with due attention to the possible difficulties (e.g. getting drawn into local factionalism). Also, consider inviting participants from different areas or even states – there is much scope for mutual learning.

14. From beginning to end, be careful with record-keeping. Often it is a good idea to designate one person to keep a copy of all the key documents.

2. Training

Note: Training is very important for a successful social audit. Make sure to allocate adequate time for it (say two days), and that all participants attend the training from beginning to end.

15. Prepare a training schedule in advance. This “100 Tips” booklet can be used as a checklist of essential topics for the training. Plan special sessions for team coordinators, record-keepers, and treasurers (if any). Don’t forget training for communication skills, social media and cultural activities. A sample training schedule is given in Annexure 1.



16. Prepare training material in writing (e.g. primers, guidelines, and verification sheets) and also audio-visual material.

17. Rely as much as possible on “active” training, including role play and field exposure. Avoid long lectures and a classroom atmosphere. Use plenty of audio-visual and cultural material.

18. Register the participants. Their names, phone numbers, email ids (if they use email) and other details are likely to be useful at various stages.

19. Insist on punctuality during (and after!) the training, this will help to impart seriousness to the entire social audit.

20. In the introductory session, explain clearly the nature and purpose of the social audit, who is convening it, the main activities involved, etc.

21. Keep ample time for the formation of teams and selection of team coordinators. While forming teams, keep in mind the need for a balanced composition, e.g. in terms of skills, experience, gender, social background, etc.

22. Try to ensure that at least one training session takes place in teams (after teams are formed), to give team members a chance to know each other and learn to work together.

23. Make sure that all volunteers have a clear understanding about how to introduce themselves and the social audit (to villagers, administrators, the media, etc.).

24. Work well in advance on the “formats” to be used to collect information and test these formats in the field before the social audit.

25. If there is any possibility of violent incidents during the social audit, make sure that the teams are prepared to handle them.

3. Field Investigations

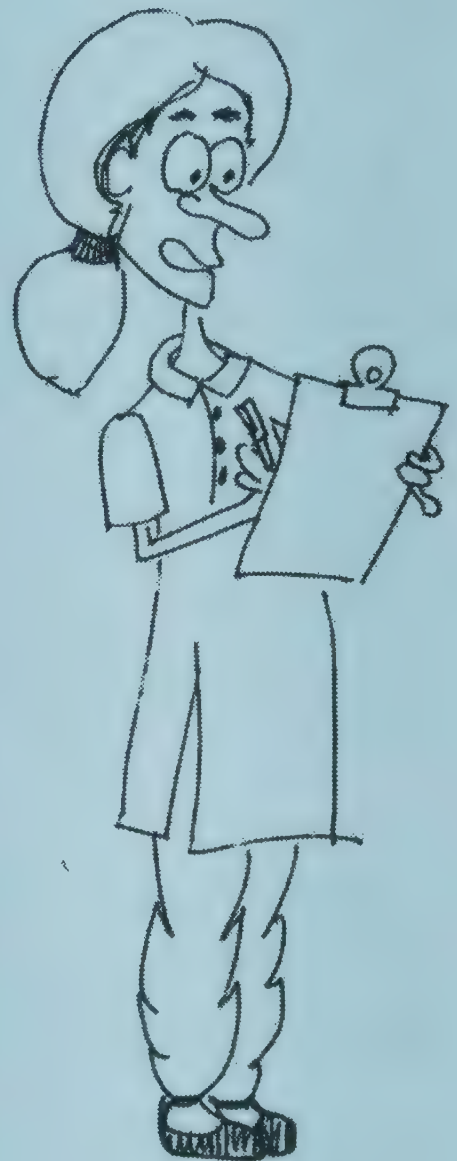
26. Be prepared for some “window-dressing” (e.g. crash “updating” of Job Cards or other records just before the social audit) on the part of government officers, Gram Panchayat functionaries or others.

27. Generally it is important to seek information directly from the concerned persons (e.g. NREGA workers), rather than from spouses, neighbours, etc. However, sometimes “cross-checking” from third parties is necessary.

28. If at all possible, avoid being followed around by the sarpanch, contractor or other unwanted escorts. If they follow you around, one volunteer should “distract” them while others conduct their enquiries.

29. Collect important testimonies in writing (or record them on video). Make sure to record all relevant details including date, people’s names, place of residence, etc.

30. When you collect written affidavits, make sure people understand what they are signing and do it voluntarily. If they are illiterate, ask a local person (outside your team) to read aloud before anyone signs.



31. When recording testimonies, try to work in pairs, with one volunteer conducting the conversation while the other takes notes.

32. Whenever possible, record testimonies on video (video-recorded testimonies are much harder to “retract” than written statements). However, avoid “stealth” video recording. Do it openly, and if in doubt, ask for permission.

33. Whenever possible, get hold of the “kaccha records” kept by the contractors, mate or others. These informal records are generally accurate, unlike the official records! Whenever available, kaccha records can be of enormous help in exposing corruption.

34. Try to take on-the-spot photocopies or photographs of any useful evidence, e.g. blank Job Cards, bank passbooks, kaccha records.

35. Advertise the concluding event of the social audit (e.g. public hearing or “social audit forum”), including time and venue, throughout the social audit.

36. Ask each team’s record-keeper to ensure that all records are in good order at the end of each day. Rough notes should be transferred to “fair copies” *the same day* to avoid confusion or gaps in the records. This review is also a chance to plan record-related activities the next day.

37. If people come to you with NREGA-related complaints (e.g. delays in wage payments), listen to them and consider helping, especially if this can be done within the framework of the social audit. However, avoid empty promises (e.g. “we will speak to the Chief Minister”) and impulsive interventions that cannot be sustained.

38. Be very careful not to misuse people’s records (e.g. by borrowing someone’s Job Card and forgetting to return it). This is especially important at the time of public meetings.

39. At every step, bear in mind the safety of local people, especially those from whom you are collecting testimonies. Do your best to avoid putting anyone at risk.

40. If situations of danger or violence arise, avoid any “bravado”. Deal with it responsibly, as a team, and retreat if necessary – a social audit is not a show of strength.

4. Logistics and Finance

41. Set up an efficient “head office” (with “Helpline”) for the purpose of coordinating the social audit, receiving regular reports, preparing press notes, receiving new volunteers, dealing with emergencies, etc.

42. As a matter of principle, hospitality or logistic assistance should not be accepted from government officials, except possibly for the concluding public hearing. Their cooperation with the social audit (especially in terms of providing access to

muster rolls and other NREGA documents) is, of course welcome.

43. If moving around is involved (e.g. from village to village) prepare each team's "route chart" in advance and ask each team to stick to it as far as possible.

44. Try to rely on public modes of transport, e.g. walking, cycling, shared autos or local buses. This will cut costs, facilitate a good rapport with local residents, and help to discover the area. If possible, however, one or two vehicles should be available for emergencies.



45. If at all possible, ask the volunteers to stay overnight in the villages, instead of "commuting". This can help in many ways, e.g. saving time, building rapport with villagers, preventing any harassment of witnesses, preventing "window-dressing" or "cover-up" operations, etc.

46. Suitable places to stay in villages include workers' homes and public buildings such as the local school. However, hospitality – in any form - from people with a vested interest (e.g. the sarpanch or a local contractor) should be strictly avoided. Panchayat Bhavan may or may not be appropriate depending on whether Gram Panchayats have a role in the social audit.

47. Ask the volunteers to travel light, without forgetting essential items. Communication props such as puppets, drums or light musical instruments are welcome. It is also useful if each team carries a torch, mosquito repellent, mobile phone and digital camera.

48. Food arrangements should be discussed in detail during the training. One possibility is to ask the village community to feed each team member in a different house. This is highly recommended - it is an opportunity to spend time in people's houses and have informal discussions with them.

5. Team Work

49. Essential tasks (including coordination, record-keeping and accounts) should be clearly assigned to different team members. You may also find it convenient to assign "logistics" to one volunteer within the team (possibly by rotation, e.g. one week at a time).

50. Insist on careful "time management" during the social audit. If different team members sleep, eat and bathe at different times of the day, much time is likely to be wasted.

51. Prepare well-supplied “team kits” for the teams. Useful items include stationery (notebooks, pens, staplers, pins, stamp pad, carbon paper etc.), leaflets, primers, wall-writing material, *daphli*, formats, maps, application forms etc. Don’t forget to include a copy of this booklet!

52. Each team should hold a short “daily meeting”, to review the progress of the work and discuss any problems that may arise, e.g. with survey work, logistics, health, team dynamics, etc. Take this opportunity to deal promptly and frankly with any personal tensions or issues amongst the team members.



53. Ask each team to keep a “team diary” and update it every day. The team diary should be maintained by the “record-

keeper” and kept in the team kit. Make sure to collect the diaries at the end of the social audit, and keep them with other archives.

54. Mixing “outside participants” with local volunteers often works well (e.g. as an opportunity for mutual learning), provided that both make an effort to interact with each other.

6. Public Hearing: Preparations

55. Plan the programme in detail, well in advance. Avoid overloading the programme and keep extra time for breaks, open interventions, etc.

56. A thematic structure for the programme (covering topics like Job Cards, work applications, wage payments, worksite facilities, corruption, etc.) often works quite well (better than, say, a “village-wise” programme). It avoids repetition and gives a sense of how widespread different problems are.

57. While planning the programme, bear in mind that testimonies presented in public will have special weight (e.g. command special attention in follow-up enquiries or action).

58. Include well-prepared cultural items (e.g. skits, songs, slogans, puppets) on the programme so that the public hearing is a lively event.

59. Think carefully about the venue (e.g. size, facilities, enclosure, accessibility, visibility, shade, neutrality, etc.) and also about the props – banners, charts, layout, etc.

60. Make sure that basic facilities are available, including (at the very least) the mandatory facilities of NREGA worksites - shade, water, first-aid *and* child care! Pay attention to the special needs of persons with disabilities or other marginalized people.

61. Give careful thought to the layout and management of the *manch* (stage). Avoid “crowding” of the stage or other disruptions. Restricting access to the *manch* to panelists, witnesses and facilitators can help in this respect.

62. Hire a very good sound system (including roaming mikes) and make sure it is tested well in advance. A bad sound system can ruin a public hearing!

63. At least two well-trained and well-prepared persons should be in charge of conducting the proceedings (“*sanchalan*”).

64. Make a list of key “testimonies” in advance and make sure the witnesses are well prepared.

65. Think carefully about the selection of the panel. Avoid a jumbo panel, invite the panelists well in advance, and try to ensure some balance in terms of gender, status, etc. Make sure to



include government officers of suitable rank who can answer queries, respond to demands and take action.

66. Prepare a simple kit for the panelists, with relevant documents, evidence, statements etc. (including copies of some affidavits).

67. Make sure the evidence to be presented to the panelists is ready, with clear marks or tags indicating crucial portions of various documents.

68. Experienced volunteers should be in charge of “summary analysis” of the social audit findings in advance of the public hearing.

69. Think in advance of the sort of “verification enquiries” that may be required after the public hearing (e.g. whether evidence presented at the hearing can be accepted as final). If any follow-up enquiries are needed, try to make sure that they are “joint enquiries”, involving at least some members of the social audit teams. This is to avoid cover-ups in the name of enquiries.

70. Make sure there is a large enough team of volunteers to handle the diverse tasks involved, and give everyone a well-defined task.

7. Public Hearing: Proceedings

71. Around the beginning, explain the nature and purpose of the event, introduce the panelists etc.; greet the participants

especially those who have travelled long distances. Explain the “ground rules” (no drunkards, no gaalis, no screaming and shouting, no long speeches, no personal attacks, no party propaganda and mobiles on silent etc.)

72. When presenting issues through “testimonies”, it is best to begin with the testimonies (in a question-answer format without blatant “prompting”) and then sum up the issues, rather than the other way round, so that people have a chance to speak for themselves.

73. Use the public hearing as an opportunity for awareness generation, for e.g. by rehearsing or explaining various provisions of NREGA from time to time.

74. Remember to mention any positive findings that may have emerged from the social audit, aside from negative findings. Positive findings are needed to keep up people’s hopes for NREGA, and credit should be given where it is due.

75. Consider making facilities available for people to submit work applications, applications for Job Cards, or complaints on the sidelines of the public hearing. Try to arrange for on-the-spot receipts from government officials. However, all this should be done only if you can ensure adequate recording and follow-up.

76. Generally, a lunch break is best avoided – this can gobble a lot of time and people often disperse after lunch. If lunch is required, try to distribute it in packets (group-wise) wherever people are sitting, instead of allowing people to disperse.

77. Ask the panelists to play an active role in the hearing, e.g. by cross-questioning the witnesses.

78. Ask some volunteers to disperse in the audience, pass the roaming mikes around, facilitate people's interventions, and help with crowd management.

79. If any security personnel is likely to be present, try to have an understanding with them in advance. Ask them to stay quietly at the back or on the side of the meeting and keep a low profile (e.g. avoid carrying weapons).

80. It is often useful to end with a resolution and/or list of demands. These, if addressed to the local administration, could include constructive suggestions as well as "complaints".

81. If complaints are submitted, insist on a specific time frame for redressal (e.g. 7 days, in line with the provisions of the Act).

82. Deal sensitively with persons who may bring complaints not related to NREGA to the public hearing, with high hopes, e.g. widows who are trying to apply for a pension. This may require advance preparation, and/or some follow-up after the hearing.

83. Plan the note-taking work carefully. Make sure there are enough note-takers for each session and that the notes are collected at the end of the day, and processed later on.

8. Media Work

84. Form a media team for the duration of the social audit and especially for the public hearing. The media team should prepare a database of journalists from the local and national media. Circulate a “press note” with one or two photographs every day, in good time (e.g. by early afternoon). Also post this material on social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

85. Make sure to prepare adequate material in writing for the media (e.g. press notes and summaries of findings). Oral communications can also be effective (e.g. TV interviews), but bear in mind that oral responses can be easily distorted or misrepresented.

86. Prepare a “press kit” for the public hearing and keep a “press corner” for journalists. One or two members of the media team should manage the press kit and press corner.

87. Press notes generally should be brief and focused, with a catchy title. The text should be lively but devoid of hype or exaggerations. If possible they should have a signature.

9. Follow-up

88. Consider staying in the area for a day or two after the social audit, in case any follow-up work there is required or to help ensure the safety of the witnesses.

89. Keep *at least* one extra day for evaluation, documentation, etc. before the team disperses. Time may also be required for follow-up negotiations with the local administration.
90. If possible, conduct an evaluation session with the social audit team or seek feedback from the participants.
91. Prepare and circulate a short report on the social audit and keep all the documentation safely.
92. Try to ensure that all those who spoke at the public hearing (or gave evidence otherwise) are safe. If needed, raise this issue with the local administration.
93. Ask local authorities to “seize” any evidence (e.g. Muster Rolls) that may be required for verification enquiries, so that the evidence is not tampered with.
94. Demand strict and prompt action by the local administration on the irregularities and complaints emerging from the social audit. This should include FIRs against persons guilty of fraud or other criminal offences.
95. If necessary, seek help from higher authorities (e.g. state government, Ministry of Rural Development, Central Employment Guarantee Council) to ensure that action is taken. Try to mobilise the media for this purpose also.

10. Other Ethical Issues

96. Avoid taking advantage of the position of power in which you may find yourself. For instance, while conducting enquiries make sure to introduce yourself, explain the purpose of the social audit, and avoid accepting any refreshments (especially from vested interests).

97. Do not put pressure on people to respond or testify, if they are reluctant. In some cases (e.g., sachiv or contractor), however, gentle persistence may be required.

98. Make sure to have a credible and transparent funding policy. Insist on scrupulous accounting and transparency in the use of any funds. Keep careful accounts at all times and display summary accounts at the public hearing.

99. Make sure that all volunteers are willing to eat in anyone's home, and committed to avoiding any form of social discrimination (within or outside the team).

100. During the training, make sure that there is consensus on the core values of the social audit, including transparency, democracy, secularism, nonviolence, and equality.

Annexures*

Annexure 1: Sample training schedule

Annexure 2: Sample training kit

Annexure 3: Sample team kit

Annexure 4: Sample schedule for public hearing.

Annexure 5: Sample press note

Annexure 6: Sample affidavit

Annexure 7: Tips for audio-visual documentation

* These Annexures are based on a field survey of NREGA conducted in May-June 2009 in six states of North India. The main findings are presented in *Frontline*, January 2009. For further details, see www.righttofoodindia.in.

Annexure 1: Sample Training Programme (10-11 May 2009)

Session	Topics to cover	Material required
1. Introduction (10-11am)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NREGA film. • Introductions. • PPT on NREGA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yatra film. - Projector.
2. NREGA intro (11.15-11.45 am)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q&A based on Primer. • Summary pages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Primers are in the kits
3. HH questionnaire Part 1 (12 to 2 pm)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose. • Method. • Line by line study of questionnaire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Questionnaires are in the kits.
4. MR Verification Part I (3-4.30 pm)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidation principles + exercise. • Verification principles + role play. • Study of irregularities (Badhigam MR). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consolidation and verification sheets in training kits. - Exercise material in session kit. - Badhigam MR in session kit.
5. Worksite questionnaire (4.45 to 6.15 pm)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process of worksite visits (back page). • Line by line. • Role play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Worksite questionnaires in kit. - Extra worksite questionnaires for role play in session kit.
6. Survey manual and summary guidelines (7.15 to 8.30 pm)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey routine and summary guidelines. • Overview of survey manual and reading instructions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summary guidelines and survey manual in training kit.
Evening of Day 1: Team formation + review of questionnaires + preparation of team kits		
7. Questionnaires cont'd (9-11.30 am)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hh questionnaire Part 2 • Interview method • Role play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hh questionnaire in training kit. - GP questionnaires in training kit. - Sample/model questionnaires in session kit.
8. Awareness generation and grievance redressal (11.45-1 pm)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entitlements page, parcha, naras, songs • Process of village public meetings • Affidavits and case studies • Collective work applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Entitlements page etc. in training kit. - (See also the new guidelines on "campaign activities".)
9. Ethics		
10. "Mop-up".	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [See "training schedule".] • [See "training schedule".] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial guidelines.

Annexure 2: Sample Training Kit

Introduction to NREGA

Primer
A copy of the NREGA
Operational Guidelines
Film

1. SURVEY

Samples

Sample completed Questionnaires [scanned copy]
Sample Job card [scanned copy]

Introduction to Survey Instruments

Household Questionnaire [In Hindi and English]
Worksite Questionnaire [In Hindi and English]
Gram Panchayat Questionnaire

2. MR VERIFICATION

Samples

Badhigaon Muster Roll File [scanned copies]
Good Muster Roll
Bihar Muster Roll [scanned copy of Darbhanga muster roll]

Introduction to Instruments

MR Verification Sheets
Remarks Sheet
MR Watch booklet

3. GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL

Sample Affidavits [scanned copy]

4. WORK SCHEDULE

Survey Guidelines
Work Plan

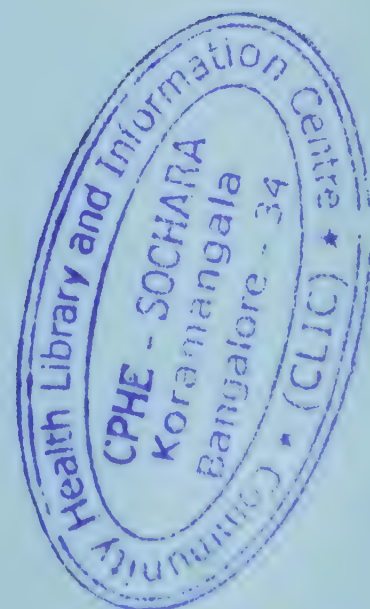
5. AWARENESS GENERATION ACTIVITIES

Awareness and Outreach Material

Leaflets (Hindi and English)
NREGA Entitlements Page (Hindi and English)
Songs
Primers (Hindi and English, ("Apna Haq Jaane", in Hindi only)

6. MEDIA WORK

Sample press releases
Simple case studies



Annexure 3: Sample Team Kit

(For a team of 5 persons visiting 3 Gram Panchayats)

Pamphlets (Hindi)
Primers (English)
“Simple Primer”
Primers (Hindi)
Worksite Questionnaire
Gram Panchayat Questionnaire

Act (Hindi and English)
Songs
Slogans
Survey Manual
Summary Guidelines
Accounts Guidelines
Work Plan (English)
Local contacts table
Letters of Introduction
Important Phone Numbers
Block Map

Stationery

Carbon paper
Stamp Pad
Blank paper
Registers
Notebooks
Stapler
Stapler Pin
U- Pins
Pens

Files
Thread (for files)
String
Clip Board
Candles
Plastic folder
Matchboxes
Pencil box
Mosquito Coil

Medicines: Crocin, Lomotil, Avil, Cotton, Antiseptic, Band aid, ORS Sachet

1 large sturdy and waterproof Team Bag for all the material

Annexure 4: Public Hearing on NREGA (Chhattarpur, 26 May 2008)

10:00 – 11:00	Cultural activities.
11:00 – 11:30	Remembering Lalit Mehta Introduction of VSK team. Personal testimonies. Messages of support. “Sankalp” One minute of silence.
11:30 – 12:00	Summary of survey findings Introduction of team, survey, panel. “Ground rules” of public hearing. Apna haq jane. Summary of survey findings.
12:00 – 2:00	Selected issues Job cards Payment related issues Unemployment allowance Corruption
2:00 – 2:30	Open session
2:30 – 3:00	Resolution and demands
3:00 – 3:30	Response of administration
3:30 – 4:00	Response of panelists

Annexure 5: Sample Press Note

(Fake Muster Roll in Khendra Khurd, Palamau)

In the course of a survey of NREGA in Chhattarpur Block (Palamau District), initiated by the G.B. Pant Social Science Institute (Allahabad), one of the survey teams discovered a fake NREGA Muster Roll in Gram Panchayat Khendra Khurd.

Background

This worksite (“Pond construction at Khendra Khurd”), managed by the Forest Department (Daltonganj Uttari Van Pramandal/Chhattarpur Paschimi), is one of sample worksites of this survey. The survey team requested the “last paid” Muster Roll (MR) for this worksite from the Forest Department on 18 May. After some hide and seek, the MR (Nos. 279572, 279573, 279574, 279575, 279576, 279577, 279578, 279579, 279580) was provided to the team on 19 May in the evening. When the team took this muster for verification to Khendra Khurd on 20th May, it emerged that signatures/thumbprints for this muster roll had been taken the day before (19 May 2008) by Forest Department officials, even though the payment was made on 7 May according to the Forest Department. Evidently, these officials were attempting to “fix” the Muster Roll before giving it to us.

Evidence of fraud

Close examination of the Muster Roll uncovered the following irregularities:

1. There were 108 names on the MR, even though only a few labourers (around 8) have actually been working at the worksite since the beginning of May. (When we visited the worksite ourselves on 17 May, there were 8 workers.)

2. There were forged signatures, e.g. Ramdeni Singh (s/o Bhagwan Singh) and Bhagwan Singh (s/o Magan Singh) gave us sample signatures that did not match with the MR.
3. Similarly, there was a false signature on the MR for Urmila Devi (w/o Ramdeni Singh), who is illiterate and unable to sign.
4. Names of people who have been absent from the village for months were on the MR, e.g. Bikram Singh s/o Bhagwan Singh who has been absent for a year.
5. There were some authentic signatures, but those were taken on 19 May as explained above. This applies for instance to Naresh Singh s/o Bhagwan Singh.
6. All 108 workers had been marked present for all days of that week (except the last day for the last worker).

Conclusion

This is a fake Muster Roll. At least 100 out of 108 names are “fake” (i.e. they are names of people who did not work at this worksite that week). It is worth adding that the signatures that were extracted from some of these people on 19 May were obtained by telling them that they would get work soon if they signed. All the evidence (Muster Roll, sample signatures, video testimonies, etc.) is available on request. This evidence was also presented by the villagers themselves in front of several TV channels (including NDTV, ETV and Sahara) on 21 May. We demand immediate action on this matter as well as in the event of any further harassment of the villagers.

Annexure 6: Sample Affidavit

AFFIDAVIT

Date: 20.05.2008

I/We, the undersigned, met workers employed under visited the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) worksite mentioned below on 20/05/2008 as part of a field survey coordinated by the G.B. Pant Social Science Institute, Allahabad. The following irregularities were observed:

Worksite: RES Dam work

Village: Nihali

Panchayat: Agalgaon

Block: Brijpur

District: Budauni

State: Madhya Pradesh

IRREGULARITIES:

जनवरी 2008 में RES विभाग द्वारा डेम/नहर का काम हमारे गांव निहली में कराया गया था। काम जब शुरू हुआ तो हमारे कार्ड जमा कर लिए गए थे।

दो हफ्तों के काम के लिए हमें रु० 69/- प्रतिदिन के दर से मजदूरी मिली लेकिन इसके बाद हमारे कार्ड RES अफसरों ने लौटाए नहीं हैं। अतः हमारे कार्ड पिछले चार महीनों से RES विभाग के पास हैं।"- Statement from following workers.

Signed by: Nandani Nayak

Witnesses:

(1) Labourers employed at the worksite

Name: कव्वी बार्ड

Residence: Nihali village

Signature: 

Name:

Residence:

Signature:

Name: बसु हारम

Residence: Nihali village

Signature: 

बसु हारम

(2) Other witnesses:

Name: Heguna

Designation: Student

Residence: Delhi

Signature: Heguna

Prashant Chaurasiya

Name:

Designation:

Residence:

Signature:

संलग्नक-1
आवेदन पत्र
कर्मचारी, बदायूँ

Annexure 7: Tips for Audio-Visual Documentation

- Start (audio/video) recording by asking the person who is testifying his/her name, village and the name of the worksite. If this is taking place in a group, you could ask everyone to introduce themselves and film this. Apart from helping for documentation purposes this might instill a sense of accountability among those interviewed for the statements that are made after this.
- Be very alert. You never know when something useful will be said. Choose a very responsible person for audio-visual documentation.
- Make sure to focus the camera on that aspect which is relevant - e.g., the face of the person should be clearly visible in at least one shot, the presence of government officials (if relevant) should be captured through a shot which has the labourers and the official in the same frame, if the person is able to sign and there is a thumbprint on the muster roll, make sure to focus the camera on the name in the muster roll along with the forged thumbprint and then record the person giving a specimen signature, etc.
- After downloading the photographs, spend some time in "naming" them providing as many identification details as possible. Give the photographs a caption such as the name of the village/GP/block. For the clips the caption can contain a short description of what the video contains. The sooner you do this after returning from the field the more likely you are to remember relevant details. Don't forget to include your name as part of the filename, in case we use it later.
- What sorts of photographs are useful? Blank job cards and

passbooks, carefully maintained job cards, assets created, groups of labourers at work, use of machines at worksites - in which case you should try to ensure that you can get something in the frame that would help to identify it as an NREGA worksite, labourers whose testimonies can be used to write a case study, worksite facilities etc.

- A summary of the interview in your own words at the end of the interview would be useful. It is best if the person doing the video documentation re-emphasizes what the person conducting the proceedings/taking the interview is saying because there is often lack of clarity due to distance from the microphone.

- If you are showing a document, e.g., a job card, muster roll, MB, it would be useful to provide a commentary on what the document is, what it shows, what discrepancies you have found. Also focus on details (such as names) carefully instead of a rapid sweep. This will help to locate names and job card numbers for identification later. Ideally, a photocopy of the particular document will help to strengthen the evidence needed to build a case.

- Capturing testimonies in a Jan Sunvai is particularly hard because of large crowds, people speaking simultaneously. Perhaps after the worker has presented his case in front of everyone you could film her testimony separately. Otherwise, film yourself summarizing the case. However, clarity of the worker's statement itself is needed for the testimony to be complete.

If you found this primer useful, please share it with others and help to disseminate it widely. There are many ways of doing this, such as:

- Organising a group discussion on this primer in your village or mohalla.
- Using sections of this primer to make posters or parchas. The posters can be put up in public places such as the local school, anganwadi, Panchayat Bhawan etc.
- Distributing or selling copies of this primer.
- Translating this primer in the local languages (there is no copyright!).

Copies of this Primer, and of other Primers in this series (in English and Hindi), are available from the Secretariat of the Right to Food Campaign – see back cover.

IN THIS SERIES

1. **Haq ki Ladai**
2. **Right to Information Act 2005: A Primer**
3. **National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005: A Primer**
4. **Forest Rights Act 2006: A Primer**
5. **Right to Education Act 2009: A Primer**
6. **National Food Security Act 2013: A Primer**
7. **PESA 1996: A Primer**
8. **Midday Meals: A Primer**
9. **Reviving Anganwadis: A Primer on ICDS**
10. **100 Tips for Social Audits**
11. **Social Security Pensions: A Primer**
12. **Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act: A Primer**

Secretariat of the Right to Food Campaign:

B 5 (basement), Nizamuddin West, New Delhi 110013

Telephone: 011 41613468, 8527359760

E-mail: righttofoodindia@gmail.com

Website: www.righttofoodcampaign.in